Beverly Cottman, also known as Auntie Beverly the Storyteller, believes in and values the inherent ability of every person to be creative and to experience joy in their creation. As a storytelling teaching artist, she shares her love for the oral tradition by presenting activities and experiences that are engaging, affirming, and educational.

**BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT ON THE ARTIST THAT INSPIRED:**

Jackie Torrence (1944 - 2004), also known as The Story Lady, had an international reputation as a teller of stories about her childhood growing up in Second Creek, NC. Torrence was famously known as an interpreter of many Aesop’s Fables, Br’er Rabbit stories, and Jack Tales of the Appalachian region, and for her particular way of presenting ‘jump’ stories which end with such a surprising one-word twist that listeners jump with fright and laughter. She authored a play, published books, and produced recordings and albums of stories presented in her own unique style.

**LEARNING GOALS:**

- The basic elements of story: sequence - beginning-middle - end, character(s), setting, plot, conflict/problem, resolution/solution, time frame, and moral or lesson.
- Learn a short story, folk tale, or fable.
- Practice the Jackie Torrence ‘Secret of Storytelling’ technique.
  1. Learn to tell a story you like - don’t memorize it word for word.
  2. Create pictures in your mind.
  3. Carefully choose your words.
  4. Put the words and pictures together using voice, face, and gestures.
  5. Present the wisdom of the tale through your telling.
  6. Create and present a story.

**MEASURE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT BASED ON:**

Knowing and presenting Jackie Torrence’s ‘secret of storytelling’ technique

**GRADE LEVEL(S):**

These lessons can be adapted for the 3rd-12th grades.

**COMPAS PRISM PROGRAM**

Teaching Artist-designed lesson plans inspired by the work of local and national African American artists
LESSON ACTIVITIES
(COMPLETE THESE ACTIVITIES IN THE ORDER LISTED)

• Read the distributed story out loud at least five times.
• Write out the main events of the story (plot).
• Make a vocabulary list of some of the specific words which occur in the story.
• Practice telling the story to yourself (in a mirror or with a tape recorder) or to others a few times, responding to self-critique or comments from others.
• Practice changing facial expression, voice dynamics, and gestures.
• Perform the story sitting in a chair - in the style of Jackie Torrence.
• Offer thoughts and interpretations of storytelling by an African American storyteller who developed a very unique way of telling a tale.
EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- Play audio and video presentations of Jackie Torrence telling stories and talking about her life and work. Most listed can be found online.
- Develop and use a rubric which meets the stated learning goals. This may be done with written and oral presentations individually or in groups.
- Students will offer thoughts and interpretations.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THIS LESSON:

- Watch: Two White Horses: Mountain Tale
- Watch: Jackie Torrence Shares Stories From Her Family Album Tillie
- Watch: The Tale of the Golden Arm
- Listen: Mountain Magic Jack Tales 1
- Listen: The Bell Witch
- Listen: Old Dry Frye
- Read: Jack and the Bean Stalk
- Read: Br'er Rabbit Tales - short one topic ones
- Read: Simple 'scary' stories
- Read: Jackie Torrence Shares Her Secrets of Storytelling

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS LESSON PLAN:

Theater Arts 4/5: Storytelling is included in the Theater Arts standards areas of Foundation, Create, Perform, Respond, Connect. Language Arts Standards relating to Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Presenting are also addressed.

4.1.1.4.1 - Describe elements of theater (storytelling)
4.1.3.4.2 - Describe how theater (storytelling) creates meaning
4.3.1.4.1 - Perform a character (original or existing)
4.4.2.2.1 - Express and generate details of setting and story elements
4.4.2.2.3 - Demonstrate how a character might move or act to support the story
4.3.5.1 - Rehearse a work and perform it for peers

OTHER NOTES FROM YOUR COMPAS TEACHING ARTIST:

Jackie Tales: The Magic of Creating Stories and the Art of Telling Them
William Morrow; 1st edition (June 1, 1998)
ISBN-10: 0380975823

The Importance of Pot Liquor
August House; 1st edition (December 19, 2005)
ISBN-10: 0874833388

Lesson Related Terminology:
Story, storytelling, genre, plot, sequence, dialect, Appalachia

Adaptations for special need students and extensions for those requiring more challenge will be developed, assigned, and monitored by the classroom teacher following the basic outline of this lesson.

WHAT COULD A COMPAS TEACHING ARTIST HELP YOU ACHIEVE IN YOUR CLASSROOM?

Learn more at COMPAS.org
LESSON TEMPLATES AND RESOURCES


- **Watch Jackie Torrence Tell Stories and Talk about her life -** YouTube videos: The Tale of the Golden Arm, Jackie Torrence Shares Her Secrets of Storytelling, Two White Horses: Mountain Tale, Jackie Torrence Shares Stories From Her Family Album, Tillie, Storyteller Lydia: Tales for Storytime

- **Read what others have written about Jackie Torrence**

- **Stories you may want to use for this lesson**
  - *Jack and the Bean Stalk*
  - *The Little Red Hen*
  - *Br’er Rabbit Tales - short one topic ones*
  - *Jack Tales*
  - *Simple ‘scary’ stories*
  - You may also select an anthology of Appalachian/American stories and select stories that are of interest to your students

- **Provide students with notebook/journal for their written work:** Their choice of story
  - Copying the story
  - Writing story elements
  - Drawings of events
  - Vocabulary/character list